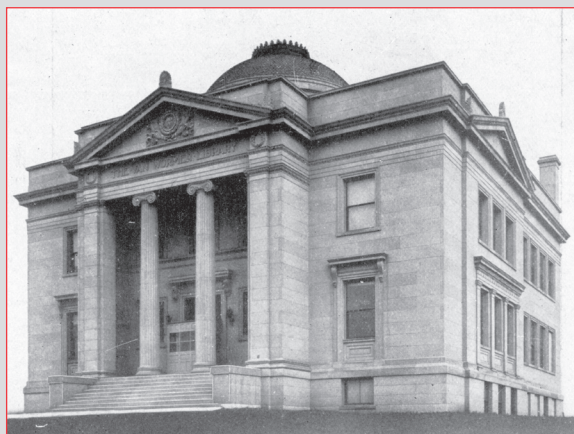


# **The History of University Libraries** 1895-2005



By Don Heinrich Tolzmann

Published in Commemoration of the  
75th Anniversary of Blegen Library  
1930-2005



*Dean and University Librarian  
Victoria A. Montavon*

## Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of Blegen Library

In striving to achieve our vision of being the scholarly information and research gateway of first choice for the University of Cincinnati community, our library faculty and staff are equally mindful of the historic origins and development of what we now call University Libraries. We welcome opportunities to celebrate significant milestones in our library history and hope you will join us in commemorating the opening in 1930 of the new “Main Library,” now known as the Blegen Library. This happy occasion prompted us to re-issue Don Heinrich Tolzmann’s fine “History of University Libraries,” which was serialized last year in our newsletter, *Source*.

Please join us in considering the elegance of the Blegen Library with its inspiring inscriptions, handsome façade, and rich collections and history.

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#### 1873

Chartered as the first municipal university in Ohio, the University of Cincinnati held its first classes, followed by its first annual commencement exercises in 1878.

#### 1875

Basic library materials began to be accumulated in the University Building on McMicken Ave.

#### 1883

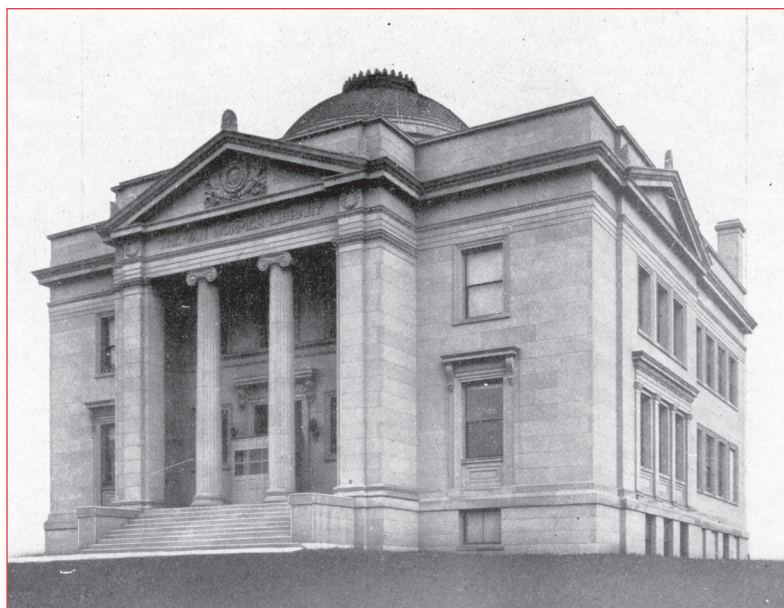
A small working library was developed in the Academic Department of the College of Liberal Arts.

## FOREWORD

University Librarians at the University of Cincinnati have often spoken of the importance of the library for a university in general and for UC in particular. Wyman W. Parker, librarian from 1951-1956, claimed that “the library, reduced to its most basic and unromantic terms, is a laboratory for discovering facts or a depository of what has been said and thought through the ages,” and that it serves as “the vital core” for the university. Arthur T. Hamlin, librarian from 1956-1968, held that “a university’s scholarship standing in the academic world is highly flexible and in this competition, which vitally affects the country’s welfare, the library is a critical component.” Finally Hal B. Schell, librarian from 1973-1980, stated: “great libraries and great universities are bound together. In a real sense, the University’s greatness brought into being our improved library services and facilities; and now, in turn, these improved facilities and services are improving the quality of the University.”

Past presidents of UC have also commented on the significance of its libraries. For example, Raymond Walters, president from 1932-1955, described UC library collections as possessing “very high scholarly importance,” and noted that they included “several which are not surpassed in the United States.” And, according to Henry Winkler, president from 1977-1984: “Nothing plays a more central role in the mission of a university than a library, which is more than books. It is, in the truest sense, a collection of knowledge that symbolizes the very purpose of a university and is quite literally, a storehouse of the best intellectual activity of past and present. It is, in short, the very lifeblood of our university.”

The history of UC’s Libraries is, therefore, a topic that relates to and reflects on the University as a whole. This survey traces the origin of University Libraries from the Gilded Age of the late 19th century into the kaleidoscopic Information Age of the 21st, and also highlights some of the basic facts, dates, and events of their history. According to library historians, the history of libraries illuminates not only the past, but also provides a foundation for an understanding of future developments. Library historian Jesse Shera wrote that an understanding of historical origins of a library facilitates an ability to deal with future developments and emphasized that the degree of success in so doing “will be largely determined by the extent to which practical considerations are founded on historic truth.” Moreover, library historian Michael Harris has observed: “all those who would predict the future of libraries would be wise to attend to the long history of library and information services in the past.”



*Van Wormer Library, circa 1905*

### 1892

William Everett Waters, Professor of Greek and Comparative Philology, was appointed as the first University Librarian, serving until 1894.

### 1895

Opening of the General Library in McMicken Hall. The Board of Trustees directed that the library’s collection be cataloged.



## I. The Beginnings of the UC Libraries

The University of Cincinnati traces its historical antecedents to the Cincinnati College, which was established in 1819, but the University, as we know it today, actually came into being after having been chartered in 1870 under provisions of the state law of Ohio. It commenced operation as an educational institution with its first classes being offered in 1873, and the first annual commencement exercises held in 1878.

The importance of library materials was recognized almost immediately. Starting in 1875, a selection of books could be found in the various class and lecture rooms of the University Building, located on McMicken Avenue. These materials were selected for daily reference use and were acquired through funds appropriated to the various departments. The number of books selected must have been limited, as students were advised to make use of the local public libraries for their study and research needs. In 1883-84, a small working library was established in the Academic Department (College of Liberal Arts), and in 1892-93, mention is first made of departmental libraries, collections that no doubt developed from the small numbers of books located in class, seminar, and lecture rooms.

In 1892, William Everett Waters, professor of Greek and comparative philology, was appointed the first University Librarian, serving until 1894. He was succeeded by Frederick Leopold Schoenle, professor of Greek and comparative philology.



*Van Wormer Reading Room, circa 1905*

In 1895, a University Library was established with the opening of the General Library on the third floor of McMicken Hall. Three librarians presided over this stage in the Libraries' development. Schoenle continued to serve as librarian until 1896 when another faculty member, Thomas Herbert Norton, professor of chemistry, who served from 1896 to 1900, replaced him. From 1900 to 1901, the General Library housed a collection of approximately 20,000 volumes. Departmental libraries were located in seminar rooms adjacent to the classrooms of their respective departments. The student population at UC had grown to about 500, and increasingly the need for a new library was felt.

In 1898, the University Board of Directors took the first step toward building this new library by accepting a generous gift from

Asa Van Wormer of 1,000 shares of stock in the Cincinnati Street Railway Co., worth \$50,000. This was used to build the Van Wormer Library, on which was placed a stone tablet with the words "erected with the money given by Asa Van Wormer in memory of his wife, Julie Van Wormer, and himself." This library, with a final cost of \$60,000, opened in the summer of 1901, although it was not formally dedicated until 1903.

### 1898

The University Board of Directors accepted a gift from Asa Van Wormer of 1,000 shares of stock in the Cincinnati Street Railway Co., worth \$50,000. This was used to build the Van Wormer Library.

### 1901

The Van Wormer Library opened with Harriet Evan Hodges as UC's first fulltime University Librarian, serving until 1907. Final total construction costs for the Library, which was not formally dedicated until 1903, was \$60,000.

### 1904

UC consisted of a student body of 600 and 150 faculty members. The holdings of UC Libraries numbered approximately 40,000 volumes.

Van Wormer was designed “in accordance with the most approved modern plans of library construction” with the intention that the building would serve the university for many years. On the main floor, the reading and periodical rooms were located on either side of the rotunda, in which was placed the delivery desk. Connected directly with the rotunda were the librarian’s office and the cataloging room. A five-story book stack with metal shelving and glass floors was in the rear of the building. The stack area was accessible from the rotunda and the cataloging room. On the upper floors were the quarters of the Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society, as well as research and seminar rooms. On the bottom level were seminar, receiving, and packing rooms.

The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio maintained a separate collection in Van Wormer. This collection, consisting of 20,000 volumes and 40,000 pamphlets, was moved to the library in 1902 as the result of an agreement between the University Board of Directors and the Society.

Another separate unit in Van Wormer was the University’s first bookstore. In 1904, the Board approved the request of three students, Isabella and Ruby Sears and Sarah Bedinger, to establish a bookstore. Their store sold textbooks, pencils, notebooks, and other related materials. It thrived so that the shop was moved to McMicken Hall in June 1905 where it continued its success.

The seminar rooms were also a new feature of Van Wormer. They had been considered essential by the faculty of various departments, since graduate study was expanding at that time. At the turn of the century, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy had been added to those conferred by UC. Also in 1900, the departments of French and German were added. Furthermore, in 1901, the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) established a graduate fellowship in American history with \$100. All of this contributed to greater use of the new library, which was open 8am-5pm on weekdays.



*Lobby and service desk in Van Wormer, circa 1905*

The move into Van Wormer meant more to the library than just a change of buildings. The first permanent full-time librarian, Harriet Evan Hodges, was appointed in 1901. In addition to the library director, eight other library staff members worked in Van Wormer when it opened in 1901: assistant at the delivery desk, head cataloger, assistant cataloger, accession assistant, classifier, library assistant, student assistant, and messenger boy. The library salary budget was increased five-fold and the book fund was quadrupled.

By 1904, a student body of approximately 600 and a faculty of about 150 had a library containing about 40,000 volumes at their disposal. Though only a few years old, the library was already feeling the need for more space and for increased book funds. The 1903 annual report of the University Board of Directors reported: “One of the great needs of the University continues to be books for the several departments. There is on the library waiting list of each department a large number of volumes which were urgently needed to supply the students of the University with the reference works necessary for adequate completion of the courses now offered in the University. Great effort should be made to supply this need.”

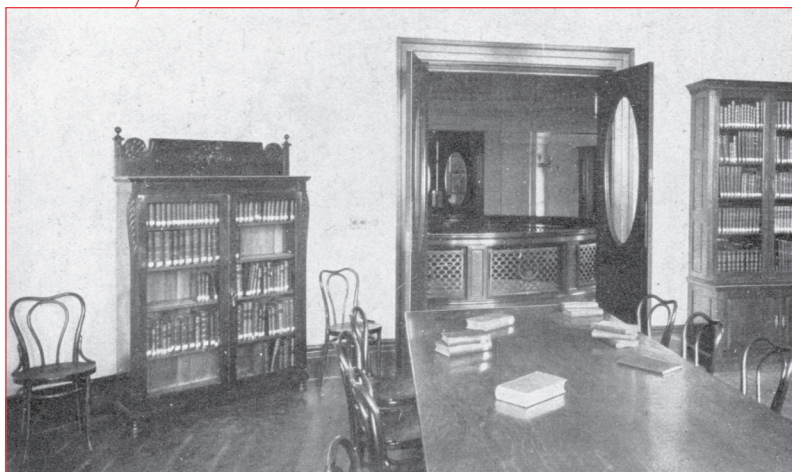
## 1909

One of the Library’s first endowed book funds, the Hillebrand Fund, was established for the purchase of books in German and French literature.

## 1916

The Engineering and Commerce Library established in Baldwin Hall. Two other libraries developed out of this library: the Applied Arts Library and the Commerce Library.





*North Reading Room, Van Wormer Library, circa 1905*

Charles Albert Read succeeded Hodges as Librarian in 1906, continuing until 1922. In the Archives and Rare Books Library is a list of "Library Rules" in effect during Read's administration. They cover such areas as hours, registration, circulation, reserves, books, and reference materials. Rule number 6 is entitled "Silence," and states: "In order that the work in the Library may go on without interruption, it is necessary to observe silence in the Library. Anyone who disregards this request may be barred from all rights and privileges of the Library."

The size of the library collection grew steadily, with the library owning 20,000 volumes in 1900; 40,000 in 1904; 70,000 in 1915; and

108,699 in 1930. In addition, the collections of the college, departmental, and other special libraries added to the number of volumes held by UC Libraries. In 1930, these libraries reported their holdings: Applied Arts: 4,532 volumes; Engineering and Commerce: 9,316; Nursing and Health Library: 1,815; Observatory Library: 5,031; Chemistry Library: 9,094; John Miller Burnam Library of Classics and Romance Philology: 9,772; YMCA Night Law School Library: 4,500; and eight other unspecified departmental libraries: 4,500 volumes.

During this early period of library development, the donation of several collections substantially added to the Libraries' growth. In 1898 William A. Procter, of Procter and Gamble, donated the Robert A. Clarke Collection as the core for building the new General Library. Rich in Americana, the Clarke Collection, which consisted of 6,759 volumes, was appraised then at a value of \$50,000. In 1899, Procter donated the Enoch T. Carson Shakespearean Library (1,420 volumes) together with the chemistry library of Professor T. H. Norton (922 volumes).

Other donations to the library were received from Eugene F. Bliss, Judge Moses F. Wilson, Matthew Thomas, Laura Seasongood, William E. Merrill, Judge M.F. Force, Professor E. M. Brown, Alexander Hill, Leon de Gisbert, and John Miller Burnam. A local German author, Gustav Bruehl, donated a valuable collection of Americana and travel literature. In 1909, one of the first endowed book funds, the Hillebrand Fund, was established for the purchase of German and French literature.

By the 1920s, the Library was well situated for the next stage of its history, which would bring with it momentous changes, catapulting it to the threshold of the Information Age.

## 1929

The Physics Library, which also included the mathematics collection, was established as a departmental library in Braunstein Hall.

## 1930

The new Main Library opened. Holdings totaled 108,699 volumes, while departmental library holdings numbered close to 50,000 volumes. Total construction cost was \$892,000.

## 1930

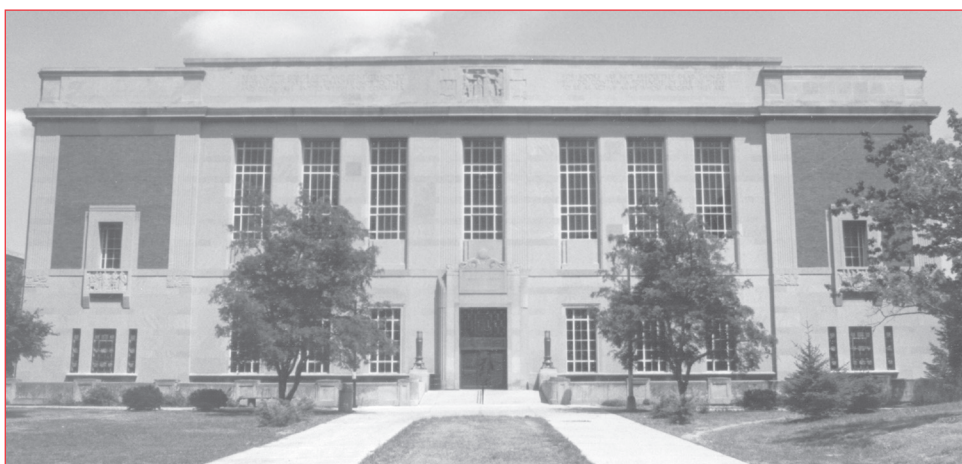
Carl T. Blegen, Professor of Classical Archeology, began collecting works on ancient Greek authors, history, and archeology for the newly established Classics Library in the Main Library.

## II. The Foundational Years, 1930-1978

In June 1930, the University's new Main Library opened. Built at a cost of \$892,000, it was designed by Harry Hake and Charles H. Kuch. The project started in 1927 when the Board of Directors appointed a library planning committee. Architectural plans were presented to the public in 1928. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* wrote of the new plans: "The dignified simplicity and spaciousness of the new library are apparent. It is expected to take its place among the most beautiful buildings in Cincinnati."

The new library building was located south of the old Van Wormer Library and lay directly on the axis of the main entrance to campus continuing the line of buildings parallel with and facing Clifton Avenue. The building stood seven stories, with the main entrance on the fourth level with a three-story façade.

The simplicity of the building's exterior was broken up with rich, symbolic sculpture. On the building's central section were two inscriptions. One was from Sir Francis Bacon's *Essay on Education*: "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider." A second was from John Milton's *Areopagitica*: "For books are not absolutely dead things but do contain a potencie on life in them to be as active as he whose progeny they are."



*The Main Library (now Blegen Library), circa 1985*

Also on the building's façade were various panels depicting outstanding contributors to civilization, including Moses, Confucius, Euclid, Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Franklin, Gutenberg, and many others. A center panel read: "The University Library is dedicated to the Advancement of Learning." On either side of the entrance were inscribed some of the major fields covered by the library: Philosophy, Science, Literature, Religion, History, and Politics.

Inside, the new library provided space for roughly 600,000 volumes, 1,000 readers, and 52 faculty carrels. The library was built for comfort, efficiency, and style, and for its time, contained state-of-the-art technology such as pneumatic tubes that carried books from the stacks to the Circulation Desk on a different level.

Level four contained the Rental Library of fiction, mysteries, and biographies. In this room was a space furnished with large, leather chairs around a club table. Here one could recline and browse library materials. Also located on the fourth floor was the Tea Room, which hosted special-occasion teas, and during Edward Henry's administration, daily teas for the staff's break. Silver tea urns with sugar/creamers sets and good china on lace clothes were standard features of these teas.

Two special rooms on the fourth floor were the Stephen Foster and the Elliston Poetry Room. In 1935, the Foster Collection was presented through the generosity of Josiah Kirby Lilly, a retired wholesale druggist. The room

### 1933

UC Libraries were a founding member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

### 1940

New librarian positions were added to reflect the growth and development of UC Libraries such as Heads of Public Services, Periodicals, Reserves, and the Graduate Reserve Room.





*Demonstration of the dumbwaiter and book drop,  
Main Library, circa 1935*

was decorated with murals of Foster's Cincinnati days, and the marble above the entrance was graced with the artwork of Robert P. Tristram Coffin, one-time Elliston Poet. About the Elliston Poetry Room, established in 1951, German author Horst Bienek wrote: "The shelves are filled to the ceiling with books of poetry from precious editions of *The Seafarer* or *Beowulf*, or Longfellow, and Emily Dickinson, to the most recent publication of still unknown authors and groups—and spread out on the tables, poetry magazines from all countries...down to mimeographed manuscripts of the currently newest avant-garde."

On the fifth floor were the Circulation and Reference Reading Rooms. The doors to this area were bronze with plate-glass grills containing printers' devices. Opposite Circulation was the Reference Reading Room containing heavy, oak reading tables. At the south end of the room was the Rare Book Room, which contained about 5,000 volumes. The three chandeliers in the Reference Reading Room bore various inscriptions meant to inspire. On the first chandelier was the Hebrew inscription of Proverbs 3:13: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding." The second chandelier bore the Latin inscription from *Terrence*: "Nothing human do I consider alien to myself." On the third chandelier, the Greek inscription by Democritus read: "Do not aim at knowing everything."

At the entrance to the Reference Reading Room was the reference librarian's alcove. According to Kornel Huvos, reference librarian from 1959-61, there was only one librarian on duty and this person spent all their time at the desk. Fortunately, the five catalogers also took turns staffing the Reference Desk so that the reference librarian only had to work one evening a week.

At the Main Library's opening in 1930, UC's Libraries held a total of 197,880 volumes. The collections steadily grew: 320,741 volumes in 1942; 649,747 in 1951; and 1,351,390 in 1978. The heads of the college and departmental libraries were responsible for collection development. In the Main Library, orders from faculty were sent directly to the head of the Acquisition Department. Gradually, a more structured approach to collections developed. In the late 1960s, two bibliographers were assigned to collect for the social sciences and humanities. Beginning in the 1970s, the reference/bibliographer system of subject specialists was established; and in 1976, an assistant director for collections was appointed. The book-periodicals' budget increased from \$20,603 in 1930 to \$737,652 in 1978.

During this period, several important endowments and collections contributed to the growth of UC's Libraries. Especially important for the collection were the Taft Funds. In 1930, the University received two million dollars from Mrs. Phelps Taft for the establishment of the Charles Phelps Taft Memorial Fund. The income of the



*The Main Library stacks, circa 1935*

## 1942

UC library holdings totaled 320,741 volumes.

## 1951

Geology-Geography Library moved from the Main Library to the Old Tech building, and the Elliston Poetry Room opened in the Main Library. UC library holdings had doubled to 649,747 volumes.

## 1960

The McBee card system was introduced for the circulation of library materials. Among new positions added were those of the Heads of Departmental Libraries and Interlibrary Loan.



Fund was to assist, maintain, and endow the study and teaching of the humanities in the College of Liberal Arts and the Graduate School of the University. Also in 1930, Carl T. Blegen, Professor of Classical Archeology, began collecting works on ancient Greek authors, history, and archeology.

In 1935, Edwin Zeydel, Chairman of the German Department, obtained for the library the German-American Collection of H.H. Fick, supervisor of the Cincinnati Public Schools German Department and a well-known German-American author.

Edward Henry retired as library director in 1950. Wyman Parker, former director of Kenyon College Library and member of General McArthur's staff during World War II, succeeded him. In 1956, Arthur T. Hamlin succeeded Mr. Parker and served as director until 1968. Bruce Kaufman, who had been assistant director, served as acting director from 1968 to 1970, and then as director from 1970 to 1973. Hal B. Schell served as director from 1973 to 1980.



*Graduate Reading Room, Main Library, circa 1940*

In addition to the director, other librarians on staff in 1930 were the assistant librarian, the heads of cataloging, circulation, acquisitions, reference, and the following college and departmental libraries: applied art, engineering and commerce, law, medicine, nursing and health, and chemistry. There were 10 other departmental libraries, including the John Miller Burnam Library of Classics and Romance Philology, the YMCA Night Law School Library, and eight other unspecified branches.

The years in the Main Library saw many changes in the library system. In 1960, the McBee card system of circulation was introduced. In 1963, the first coin-operated photocopy machine was placed in the library. In 1974, the Chemistry-Biology Library became the first to introduce computerized bibliographic searching.

New departments, services, and personnel were also introduced during this time. By 1940, there were heads of Public Services, Periodicals, Reserves, and the Graduate Reserve Room. In 1956, the Geology-Geography Library moved from the Main Library to Old Tech. By 1960, there was a head of Departmental Libraries and Interlibrary Loan. By the 1970s, divisional assistant director positions were established, reflecting the evolution from departmental organization to divisional organization into public and technical services. This growth and development translated into an increasing space shortage for both people and library collections and resulted in the relocation of a number of library offices and the development of an off-campus storage facility.

There were several problems with having a closed-stack system, one of which came to light in the summer of 1968 when a librarian put out a fire set in the library stacks. Thereafter, locks were placed on the gates to the stacks and a faculty committee patrolled the area day and night for several months to prevent any further occurrences. Another building problem was that the windows adjacent to the stacks on the back wall could be opened and books thrown out. This resulted in several book thefts, including a full set of the *Encyclopedia of*

## 1961

The Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music joined UC bringing with it the Gorno Memorial Music Library, founded in 1949. Housed in Mary Emery Hall, the Music Library experienced great growth in the 1960s & 70s, necessitating its move to Blegen Library in 1983.

## 1964

After having been located in the Main Library for close to 60 years, the Cincinnati Historical Society moved to its new location in a wing of the Cincinnati Art Museum.

*Philosophy.* Horst Bienek wrote of an unusual custom: “And only once a year, on Valentine’s Day, does it happen that they [students] throw books out the windows (from high-spiritedness, from hate, or just because it’s tradition?), where they are collected again the next morning by distraught librarians.”

Arthur Hamlin commented on another problem of the building in 1963 when he observed that although the building had many fine points, it had unfortunately been “designed to absorb heat in the summer and cold in the winter. Some of our reading rooms are natural ovens with huge, unshaded window areas but virtually no natural ventilation.” He estimated that staff efficiency fell 20% during the summer months due to the heat. In 1963, air conditioning was suggested, but investigations demonstrated that central air in such a structure was impossible; therefore, in 1969 window units were installed. Unfortunately, certain areas could not be air-conditioned. In the book stacks, the temperature often reached 100 degrees in the summer. In the winter, the temperature in the Reference Room was known to have fallen to 40 degrees.

It became apparent that a new library was necessary at the University. In 1967, a planning committee completed a report that recommended, first, the building of a new central library to serve principally the humanities and the social sciences, and second, the eventual building of a science library. The opening of the new Central Library (now known as the Walter C. Langsam Library) in 1978 sets the stage for the next period of UC Library history.



*Blegen Library, circa 2003*

### 1969

The OMI College of Applied Science joined UC, bringing with it its library dating back to the founding of the Ohio Mechanics Institute in 1828, making it the oldest UC library collection.

### 1970

The Chemistry and Biology libraries merged to form the new Chemistry-Biology Library in Rieveschl Hall.

### 1973

The Special Collections Department, later named Archives and Rare Books, was formed.

### III - Into the Information Age, Since 1979

By the beginning of the 21st century, the Information Age had introduced profound change in the world of books and libraries – much like the dramatic impact the discovery of printing had exerted in the 15th century. New kinds of information systems emerged, that would lead to the World Wide Web. At the University of Cincinnati, the dedication of the new Central Library in 1979 coincided with the onset of this era.



*Langsam Library, circa 1978*

At the dedication of the new Central Library, then UC president Dr. Henry R. Winkler observed that nothing “plays a more central role in the mission of a university than a library.” He noted that a library “is more than books. It is, in the truest sense, a collection of knowledge that symbolizes the very purpose of a university and is quite literally, a storehouse of the best intellectual activity of past and present.” Winkler indicated that the new library had over 200 carrels, 1,950 reader spaces, and had been built at a cost of almost \$14 million. In 1979, the new library was serving 6,000 users daily, almost triple that of the old library, and had capacity for 700,000 volumes.

The 1980’s demonstrated that change was going to be constant for the libraries. In 1983, renovation of the old Main Library was completed at

a cost of \$5 million and renamed in honor of Dr. Carl Blegen, Professor of Classical Archaeology and Head of the Classics Department. Today, Blegen Library houses the Archives and Rare Books Library, the College-Conservatory of Music Library, the Classics Library, and the Curriculum Resources Center. Blegen, however, was not the only renovation project on the agenda. In 1987, the Physics and Geology Departments moved into the new Geology-Physics Building and were followed three years later by the Physics and Geology Libraries, which merged to form the Geology-Physics Library, and in 2004 became the Geology-Mathematics-Physics Library. In 1996, the new Design, Architecture, Art and Planning Library was dedicated in conjunction with the opening of the new Aronoff Center for Design and Art.

On the administrative scene, Hal Schell was succeeded by Charles Osburn in 1981 as Vice Provost for University Libraries, a position that later became Dean and University Librarian so as to align the Libraries with other college units. During Osburn’s administration, the Central Library was renamed Langsam Library in 1986 in honor of Dr. Walter C. Langsam, historian and former UC president. The 1980s were also a time of considerable growth and development of library collections and services. The circulation of materials in Langsam Library increased 50% from 1978 to 1983, and lending requests from other institutions increased 30%.

Other momentous changes of the 80s included the adoption in 1982 of an automated, online public catalog and circulation system as a University-wide budget priority. After receiving a \$500,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University raised \$1.5 million to enable the Libraries to substantially upgrade graduate and research collections.

#### 1974 & 1975

The mathematics collection was moved from the Physics Library to the Old Chemistry Building, where it became the Mathematics Library. The Curriculum Resources Center was moved from Teacher’s College into the old Main Library, now Blegen.

#### 1978

The new Central Library opened (later renamed Langsam Library).



By the end of the 1980s, Osburn was succeeded as Dean by Linda Cain who presided over another period of growth. In the 1989-90 Annual Report of the University Libraries, Cain referred to the significant changes taking place, especially the new automated systems, and observed: "It is the nature of research libraries today that change will be constant..." adding it was imperative that "...as we manage this changing environment the needs of library users be kept paramount." The Annual Report also reported on library collections, stating that 200 new serials titles had been added and some 4,000 gift books donated by 120 donors, but noted that "enhancements to the collections budget are critically needed to support new programs and bring research and undergraduate collections to a level commensurate with programmatic needs of faculty and students." Regarding facilities, the report stated that the joint proposal by UC, Miami University, and Wright State University for a regional collection depository had been approved for state funding, and that it would be built at the Middletown campus of Miami University. At this time, the Library Catalog grew to a total of 950,000 records, and the Catalog Department cataloged 35,000 new titles, almost a 10% increase over the previous year. Well over 17 million transactions were logged into the catalog. Bibliographic instruction rose to more than 5,000 sessions, thereby reaching a large portion of the student population.



*Langsam Library window washer, circa 1978*

In 1991, David F. Kohl became Dean, serving until 2001. By this time, the Information Age was cresting with the introduction of the Internet. By 1994 there were 10,000 Web sites, and four years later this had expanded to 500,000, with more than 50 million people connected worldwide. By the early 1990s, 3,000 newspapers had Web sites, as did many major print magazines and journals, and most libraries provided global access to their collections.

In 1992, Kohl issued a "Vision Statement" outlining the issues facing libraries in the Information Age: access vs. ownership, the invisible user, the transformation of technical services, and non-paper formats. Sounding a recurring theme, he noted: "Change will be a dominant and consistent feature of life in the world of libraries."

In 2001, Victoria A. Montavon became Dean and observed she was "attracted to the University of Cincinnati for many reasons, but at the top of the list are the University's widely respected research mission and its impressive record of building outstanding research-level library collections and resources."

Leading University Libraries into the 21st century, Montavon inaugurated the Strategic Plan 2003-05 to chart the future course of the Libraries. With the active involvement of the entire library staff, the plan addressed the following strategic directions: quality service, staff development, collection development

and access, organizational effectiveness, library instruction/training/assessment, marketing and outreach, facilities enhancement, digital initiatives, and development and grants.

In 2002, Langsam Library was renovated, bringing with it not only new carpeting and a bright, fresh new look, but also substantial technological and facilities improvements, including upgraded computer workstations, a new MAC lab, the Student Technology Resources Center, and new and improved public service points such as the Info Commons and a new Circulation Desk.

The long-term commitment to providing quality library resources can be seen in the steady progress towards improving UC Libraries' ranking in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) index. In 2002-03, ARL ranked

## 1980

The Library Guild, friends of the library, formed with Frank Purdy, former U.C. Vice-President, serving as its first chair.

## 1983

Renovated Blegen Library opened with Archives and Rare Books, College-Conservatory of Music Library, Classics Library, and the Curriculum Resources Center. Circulation at Langsam Library increased by 50% since 1978.

## 1988

The catalog of UC Libraries became available online.

UC Libraries (including University Libraries, Marx Law Library, and Medical Center Libraries) at #45 compared to #72 a decade ago. Volumes held by UC Libraries more than doubled from 1977-78 (1,276,837) to 2002-03 (2,977,475). Reflecting the Information Age, the number of public computers in University Libraries rose from zero in 1978 to 300 in 2004.

The growth of University Libraries can also be seen in the breadth of the libraries themselves. In 2004-05, University

Libraries consists of: Langsam Library, Archives and Rare Books Library, Biology-Chemistry Library, College-Conservatory of Music Library, College of Applied Science Library, Classics Library, Curriculum Resources Center, Design, Architecture, Art & Planning Library, Engineering Library, and the Geology-Mathematics-Physics Library. Additional libraries at UC include the Marx Law Library, the Medical Center Libraries, and libraries at Clermont College and Raymond Walters College. Although University Libraries and the other UC libraries are separate administratively, there remains a strong sense of partnership and collaboration among all UC libraries.



*Langsam Library, 2003*

In 2003, Langsam Library marked its 25th anniversary with a special program that celebrated and honored the many achievements and accomplishments of UC Libraries. In his remarks at the anniversary, Dr. Winkler emphasized that the library “was more than a building, no matter how handsome,” and that it is “the University’s central tool in implementing its task of fostering learning and exploration, developing new knowledge, and in general fulfilling its commitment to the life of the mind that is at the center of education.” Commenting on the topic of change, he observed: “Think of the changes in library services since 1978 when the new Langsam was really state-of-the art among its contemporaries. The massive card catalogue stood in the middle of the fourth floor, stored in shelf after shelf of three-by-five cards, some of them typed, some handwritten, all having to be handled physically as one thumbed through the holdings. Now that catalogue has disappeared and not only can students and faculty bring up the information about the library’s materials on the computers that have sprung up in almost every corner of the library, but they can access the system from their dormitory rooms and their homes, discover quickly and efficiently what the library holds, whether it is available, and when it is due to be returned.”

Remarking on the importance of libraries to a university, Winkler pointed to the future, saying that we should: “never forget that the library is the very life blood of our University. And let us celebrate this anniversary with the hope that the next such celebration will commemorate another 25 years of richer service to our academic community.” On this note, UC Libraries can look back with pride to the achievements of the past, and look forward to fulfilling its vision as “the scholarly information and research gateway of first choice for all members of the University of Cincinnati community.”

The extent to which University Libraries has striven to realize its vision as “the scholarly information and research gateway of first choice” is clearly evident in this history of 110 years of service, demonstrating the centrality of the libraries to the mission of the University of Cincinnati.

## 1991

The Geology-Physics Library opened in Braunstein Hall.

## 1992

The Friends of University Libraries sponsored the first “Authors, Editors, and Composers” program featuring and celebrating UC faculty publications and creative works.

College of Applied Science Library



Archives &amp; Rare Books Library



College-Conservatory of Music Library



Engineering Library



## University Librarians

William Everett Waters, 1892-94  
 Frederick Leopold Schoenle, 1894-1896  
 Thomas Herbert Norton, 1896-1900  
 Harriet Evans Hodges, 1901-1907  
 Charles Albert Read, 1907-1922  
 Julian S. Fowler, 1922-1928  
 Edward A. Henry, 1928-1951  
 Wyman W. Parker, 1951-1956  
 Arthur T. Hamlin, 1956-1968  
 Bruce Kaufman, 1970-73  
 Hal B. Schell, 1973-1980  
 Charles Osburn, 1981-1986  
 Linda Cain, 1987- 1990  
 David F. Kohl, 1991-2001  
 Victoria A. Montavon, 2001-

## University Libraries, 2005

Archives and Rare Books Library  
 Gorno Memorial Music Library  
 Timothy C. Day College of Applied Science Library  
 Ralph E. Oesper Chemistry-Biology Library  
 John Miller Burnam Classical Library  
 Curriculum Resources Center  
 Design, Architecture, Art & Planning Library  
 Engineering Library  
 Geology-Mathematics-Physics Library  
 Walter C. Langsam Library

### 1996

The Design, Architecture, Art & Planning Library opened in the Aronoff Center.

### 2002

The renovation of the Engineering Library was completed. The library's Quiet Reading Room is the oldest academic library facility in Greater Cincinnati.

### 2002

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) ranked UC Libraries at #45 compared to #72 a decade earlier.



## A Note on Sources

This history is a revised and expanded version of a three-part series of articles by the author, which appeared in *Source*, University Libraries' newsletter, in 2003-04. The history is based on primary sources in the Archives and Rare Books Library. For general historical information, several histories of libraries, as well as of the University of Cincinnati, were also consulted. The former included: Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World*, 4th ed (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1995); Michael H. Harris, *Reader in American Library History*. (Washington, DC: Microcard Editions, 1971); and Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Alfred Hessel, and Reuben Peiss, *The Memory of Mankind: The Story of Libraries Since the Dawn of History*. (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2001); and, the latter: Reginald McGrane, *The University of Cincinnati: A Success Story in Urban Higher Education*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) and Kevin Grace and Greg Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*. (Montgomery, AL: Community Communications, Inc., 1995).

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### Author

Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Curator of the German-Americana Collection, also serves as Director of German-American Studies and teaches Books and Library History at Northern Kentucky University as an adjunct faculty member of the University of Kentucky School of Library Information Science.

### Designer

Melissa Cox Norris, Director of Library Communications, serves as Editor of *Source*, University Libraries' newsletter.



Classics Library



Geology-Mathematics-Physics Library



Chemistry-Biology Library



DAAP Library

### 2003

25th anniversary of Langsam Library.

### 2004

30th anniversary of the German-Americana Collection, the 75th anniversary as a Government Document Depository, and the acquisition of the UC Libraries' 3-millionth volume.

### 2005

75th anniversary of the old Main Library (now Blegen Library), and the 110th anniversary of University Libraries with the opening of the General Library in 1895.



University Libraries  
University of Cincinnati  
PO Box 210033  
Cincinnati, OH 45221

**[www.libraries.uc.edu](http://www.libraries.uc.edu)**

Designed by  
Melissa Cox Norris